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DEPT PASS FOR WHA/OAS ANDREW STEVENSON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [GT](#)  
SUBJECT: SANTA ROSA RELOCATION PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY  
COMPLETED

11. SUMMARY: On April 14, the last two Guatemalan families were relocated from the village of Santa Rosa inside the territory of Belize. The move brings to an end one of the longest-running and high-profile irritants in the Guatemala-Belize bilateral relationship. The OAS Adjacency Zone Office played a key role in negotiating and effecting the removal of Santa Rosa, with USG support. The successful completion of the Santa Rosa resettlement project does not remove the need for the OAS Adjacency Zone Office, which will continue its meditation, monitoring, and confidence-building work along the border. The OAS office's funding ran out at the end of March, but the office received emergency funds pending the results of an OAS sponsored fundraising meeting in Washington scheduled for the end of April. END SUMMARY.

12. At 10:00 on April 14, the last two Guatemalan families were relocated from their homes inside Belize to a new settlement located 60 kilometers inside Guatemala. This move concludes the OAS managed Santa Rosa Relocation Project. The town of Nueva Santa Rosa is home to the 104 residents of old Santa Rosa and boasts brand new homes and its own school building. The OAS Adjacency Zone Office Director, Miguel Angel Trinidad, stressed that the project did more than provide the villagers with a new place to live, providing them with "dignified housing and a new life." The new community has a school and is only 16 kilometers from a health clinic and other community services. In order to complete the relocation process before the end of the growing season, the OAS office hired Belizean farmers living near old Santa Rosa to collect the relocated farmers' crops and deliver them to Nueva Santa Rosa. It is expected that on April 18, after the crops are collected, members of the Belize Defense Force will set up a permanent presence in old Santa Rosa.

13. Trinidad met with Embassy officers several times in March to provide updates on the relocation process, and ask for assistance in obtaining out-year funding for the OAS Adjacency Zone Office. He explained that the office was set up to provide mediation and monitoring services to authorities on both sides of the border, not just to manage specific relocation projects. He pointed out that the OAS office predates the high-profile Santa Rosa relocation project by several years, even though the office's recent funding was tied to that resettlement project. He explained that the Santa Rosa relocation was only one of several border issues his office had helped resolve over the years and expressed concerns that his funding would run out at the end of March. He recently told Poloff that the OAS had provided temporary funding based upon the belief that donor countries would agree to provide funding for 2008 as a result of a donor meeting scheduled for the end of April. Trinidad said he understood that a fundraising meeting of "friends of

Guatemala and Belize" would soon be held in Washington, and that participation of the U.S., the UK, Germany, Mexico, and Spain was anticipated. Trinidad estimates that he needs an annual budget of \$300,000 and envisions that his office could continue to play an important role until a final resolution to the long-standing border dispute is reached.

¶4. COMMENT: Finishing the resettlement of the Santa Rosa residents to the new location inside Guatemala is a significant achievement, and effectively removes a major irritant to Guatemalan-Belizean relations as the two countries try to settle their long-standing border dispute. The OAS Adjacency Zone Office has done excellent work in affecting this difficult resettlement. The OAS Adjacency Zone Office remains crucial to reducing tensions on the border and creating a positive climate for the process to resolve the border dispute once and for all.  
Derham